

# FORAGE NEWS

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## DECEMBER 2004

Garry D. Lacefield, Extension Forage Specialist • Christi Forsythe, Secretary

### FORAGES AT KCA IN OWENSBORO



This marks the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that we have had a "Forage Symposium" to kick-off the KCA activities. Our program will start at 10:30 a.m. and go until 12:00 Noon on January 7 at the Executive Inn Rivermont in Owensboro. The program committee has put together three very timely, practical, topics:

- 10:30 Welcome & Introductions
- 10:40 Importance of Forage Quality - Dr. Garry Lacefield, Extension Forage Specialist, University of Kentucky
- 11:00 Corn as a Grazing Crop - Dr. David Ditsch, Extension Agronomist, University of Kentucky
- 11:30 Improved Grazing Systems Make Dollars and Sense - Mr. Jason Tower, Superintendent, Southern Indiana Purdue Agriculture Center, Dubois, Indiana
- 12:00 Adjourn to lunch and Trade Show

The program will conclude in ample time for you to visit the exhibits and have lunch before afternoon activities begin at 1:30 p.m.

We will have a proceedings of all three presentations, along with other information at the "Forage Symposium". There is no charge to attend the Forage Symposium.

**Hay Quality Workshop** - In addition to the Forage Symposium and at the request of Dave Maples, we are offering two Hay Quality Workshops in the Trade Show area. This program is in cooperation with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, and the Kentucky Forage & Grassland Council. We will have the KDA Hay Testing Van along with several bales of hay. We will give you a chance to evaluate the hay with the person getting the closest to our laboratory results receiving a prize. We will discuss hay quality, factors affecting hay quality, management strategies to improve hay quality and relate hay quality to animal performance. The Hay

Quality Workshop will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Friday and repeated at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday.

Look forward to seeing you January 7 at 10:30 in Owensboro.



### KENTUCKY ALFALFA CONFERENCE – 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

The 25<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference will be held February 24, 2005 at the Cave City Convention Center. Our keynote speaker will be Mr. Warren Thompson who has been "Mr. Alfalfa" in Kentucky for the past 63 years. Featured out-of-state speakers include: Dr. Neal Martin, Director of the Dairy Forage Research Center in Madison, Wisconsin; Dr. Mark McCaslin, President, Forage Genetics Research Station, West Salem, Wisconsin; and Dr. Don Ball, Extension Agronomist, Auburn University. Mr. Lee Robey, Robey Farms in Logan County will discuss the role of alfalfa in their dairy operation. In addition to the above, five additional speakers will present the latest information on alfalfa diseases, alfalfa impact, alfalfa hay for horses, and advances in alfalfa seed coating. Since this is our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Program, I expect a full house in the exhibit area along with our largest silent auction and a wonderful meal provided by the Cave City staff. Alfalfa Awards will be presented at noon.

**See you in Cave City, February 24, 2005.**



### GROUPS FORM NATIONAL ALFALFA COALITION

The forage industry now has a voice in Washington, D.C. Three forage associations – the National Alfalfa Alliance, the National Hay Association and the American Forage and Grassland Council – have formed the National Alfalfa Coalition.

Its purpose is to encourage forage research and the gathering of forage statistical data, monitor legislation and promote hay exports, says Dan

Undersander, University of Wisconsin forage agronomist and one of the coalition organizers.

"We need to speak with one voice on topics that we agree upon," he adds. The coalition has already convinced USDA's National Ag Statistics Service, which was planning to eliminate hay production reports, to instead expand its forage coverage.

"We visited with people from the statistics service and one guy said, in 15 years, we were the first to come and talk about alfalfa." After explaining a pilot project on collecting haylage data, the coalition convinced the statistics service to expand forage data collection to include haylage figures in 18 major dairy states, says Undersander.

"Ag statistical data says that hay is the No. 3 crop and alfalfa is No. 4, so that's the message we're trying to take to Congress," he says.

The coalition has hired an alert service to keep it informed on possible legislation that would affect the forage industry. Its next step is to form a rapid response team to act when a surprise bill that could impact forages comes before Congress.

For more information on the coalition, contact Undersander at 608-263-5070 or [djunders@facstaff.wisc.edu](mailto:djunders@facstaff.wisc.edu); Don Kieffer from the National Hay Association at 727-367-9702 or [haynha@aol.com](mailto:haynha@aol.com); Rod Christensen of National Alfalfa Alliance at 509-585-6798 or [agmgt@agmgt.com](mailto:agmgt@agmgt.com); or Ed Twidwell of the American Forage and Grassland Council at 225-578-4070 or [etwidwell@agctr.lsu.edu](mailto:etwidwell@agctr.lsu.edu). (SOURCE: Fae Holin, HayAndForage.com)



## ELEVEN SEASONS OF PASTURE PRODUCTIVITY AND HEIFER PERFORMANCE UNDER ROTATIONAL GRAZING: DATA FROM WICST.

**ABSTRACT:** In Wisconsin, approximately 25% of dairy farmers are using rotational grazing on some of their farm. One treatment in the Wisconsin Integrated Cropping Systems Trial evaluates rotational grazing on four paddocks of a cool-season grass legume pasture by dairy heifers. Plots have been grazed for eleven years at one site and four years at the other research site in southern Wisconsin. Each year, four to six heifers grazed the plots for an average of 140 days each season (total number of heifers on pasture = 118) and compared to a weight goal of 0.8 kg/day. "On-offer" forage availability was fairly constant prior to each move of the heifers in the 15 sampling periods, and feed quality was good (mean RFV = 125). Forage quality peaked in mid-May (RFV = 151). During the early spring flush (May 11-June 10) availability increased to 2245 kg/ha, and excess forages was hayed. The animal performance goal of 0.8 kg/day was consistently met. Grain supplementation to the animals on pasture ranged from \$0.18/head/day at one site feeding primarily barley, to \$0.63/head/day at the other site where a complex mix of corn/soybean/oat feed was used. The

confinement (control) group averaged slightly higher weight gains of 0.95 kg/day and feed costs were \$0.73/head/day over the same period. (SOURCE: J.L. Hedtcke, J.L. Posner, J.O. Baldock, University of Wisconsin-Madison)



## HAY STORAGE UPDATE

In November 2002, the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board approved a model program to provide cost-share funds for constructing hay, straw, and commodity storage facilities. The main goals were to reduce hay storage losses; improve livestock feed quality and feeding programs; and enhance hay, straw & grain marketing opportunities.

During the past 2 years, over 80 counties have participated and about \$12.2 million in county Ag. Development funds have been committed to the program. Participating farmers have matched that amount on a 50/50 cost share basis bringing the total investment to over \$24 million.

By far, the greatest portion of that investment has been used to construct hay storage structures. Although precise numbers are not available, a current estimate is that over 3000 new hay storage structures have been built, providing a one-time storage capacity for about 360,000 tons of hay. Assuming a modest 10% savings from reduced hay storage losses and an average hay value of \$60/ton, direct benefit to farmers in hay savings alone calculates to about \$2.2 million per year. Additional benefits such as better feed quality, new marketing opportunities, and reduced feed cost are also likely but are more difficult to estimate.

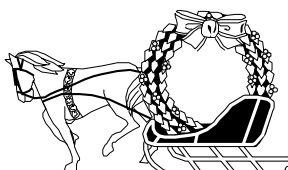
It is expected that this program will continue at least through 2005 as interest remains high at the county level. (SOURCE: Dr. Doug Overhults, Extension Ag. Engineer, University of Kentucky)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- DEC 13-15 National Alfalfa Symposium, San Diego, CA
- JAN 7 Forages at KCA, Owensboro
- JAN 19-20 Heart of America Grazing Conference, Wilmington, OH
- FEB 24 25<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Cave City Convention Center
- JUN 11-15 American Forage & Grassland Conference, Bloomington, IL
- JUN 26-JUL 1 20<sup>th</sup> International Grassland Congress, Dublin, Ireland
- JUL 28 UK All Commodity Field Day, Princeton



**Best wishes for a Happy Holiday Season!**



*Garry D. Lacefield*

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